

DECLASSIFIED

MONDAY
APRIL 27, 1953

We are due in Venice at 1:15 p.m. Meanwhile, the night has been agitated by the rocking of this fast train and the strident cries in those stations where we stopped. In Italy the volubility and noise are remarkable. This morning the landscape from Brescia onward is dreary under a pelting rain but the Italian coffee, rolls and honey are good.

I have been occupying myself today with the Paris household books. The expenses are formidable, about 75,000 francs a week (215 dollars) for the cook's expenses alone for food. In addition there is the butler's book, the valet's, E.'s maid's, and the chauffeur's, not to mention purchases of butter, ham, etc., made in dollars at the Commissary, as well as the wine - although I have still about 4,000 bottles left over from the year before last.

We have a butler, a valet de pied, a cook, a kitchen maid, E.'s maid, a house maid, and the nurse Stevie. The Embassy assigns the chauffeur Eugène to me, and I supplement his salary with an extra 8,000 francs a month. I do the same for the concierge to the tune of 2,000 francs per month, and give 6,000 francs to Georges Bourjois at Versailles - he is employed by the Domaine of Versailles as a guardian. I give Odette Dewavrin \$10 per month for helping us with a variety of things. The butler gets 30,000 francs, Robert (the valet) and Lucie (the cook) each 25,000 francs, the kitchen maid and upstairs maid each about 18,000 francs, Denise (E.'s maid) 35,000 francs, and Stevie's salary not yet settled. Also, there are heavy social insurance charges payable by me on all these salaries. Since I have been living for years beyond my income and eating up capital, I should not like to continue long at this rate.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR

REVIEWED BY CRc DATE 7-1-81

For XDS ☐ EXT. DATE
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The official rate for the franc is 350 to the dollar, in the black market it is above 400. I am paid as a Foreign Service Officer Class I Reserve \$14,200 before taxes, which in my case amount to more than 80 percent. Then there is a post allowance and other compensation of about \$100 a month. I have a drawing account for entertainment of distinguished foreigners of up to \$500 per month. ~~REDACTED~~
~~REDACTED~~
~~REDACTED~~

This trip past Mantua, Padua, etc., is ~~very~~ beautiful, the flat country ~~very~~ intensively and well cultivated. Intriguing glimpses of several Palladian villas near Vicenza.

It was still raining when we arrived in Venice, but even so the city preserved its appearance of being utterly unlike any other inhabited place in the world. No words have ever done it justice, for it is a dream in wood, brick and marble.

We dined at the Hotel Gritti with the young Norman Armour. Our friend the headwaiter of bygone years - a truly remarkable man - has retired and is now living, at ease it must be hoped, in a hotel conducted by his son-in-law on Lake Como. Nevertheless, the fare remains of a most appetising order, the scampi, so common here, especially succulent. Nor were we faithless to the pleasant Soave wine of Verona, year 1949, that one can consume with pleasure, and without after-pangs, in great quantities.

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